



IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) introduced by the Government of India has been a ground-breaking and timely initiative, addressing the confusion among stakeholders in the post COVID-19 pandemic. The policy's some of the recommendations have been surprising for educationists. NEP 2020 has a profound impact on both school and college education, with its emphasis on inclusive education. This concept aims to provide equal opportunities for education to all students, regardless of their birth, region, background, or circumstances, and seeks to foster holistic development from school to college level. The inclusive education approach envisioned in NEP 2020 focuses on classroom teaching and develop essential life skills such as behavioural, emotional, professional, and social skills among students. By creating a healthy and supportive environment, the policy aims to benefit the entire society. This article will focuses on the impact of NEP 2020 on higher education, exploring how the policy's provisions are transforming the landscape of colleges and universities in India.

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) draft was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, Shakila T. Shamsu, Secretary OSD (NEP) Ministry of Higher Education along with other members of Human Resource Development, New Delhi. The Ministry of Human Resource Development subsequently released the Draft of Education Policy [1] which was followed by a series of public consultations. To formulate the draft policy, the Ministry conducted an extensive consultation process, receiving more than 2.25 lacs suggestions from various stakeholders from villages, towns, cities, and metropolitan cities though out India. The comprehensive draft policy consist of 484 pages whereas the NEP 2020 report [2] contain 66 pages. The vision of the National Education Policy is: "National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all". This is approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020 to look for many transformative changes in Indian education system Outlines the vision of India's new education system. NEP will lay the foundation for 21st century India Improvement in quality of higher educational institutes which will be at par with the global standards.

In the face of a rapidly changing global landscape, it became necessary to revamp the existing education system to align with the demands of a knowledge-driven economy. A new national education policy 2020 was needed to enhance the quality of education, foster innovative techniques, and promote research aligned to societal needs. To give the Indian education system a global presence, it was essential to adopt international standards of education in the education policy. The implementation of this new policy is regarded as a big milestone of courage and foresight in the field of education.

In global perspective, a revision of India's education policy was essential to cater to the demands of a knowledge-based economy and enhance the accessibility of the Indian education system on a global scale. The primary objective of this policy is to guarantee inclusive and high-quality education for all by 2030. NEP 2020 also ensures to promote lifelong learning opportunities among learners [3]. The need for reform in India's education system had been acknowledged for some time, but it became even more pressing during the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the difficulties faced by disadvantaged and under-privileged students in accessing online education. As outlined in the official document of the Government of India, the National Education Policy 2020 addresses various concerns related to primary, secondary, higher, and technical education in the country. Key aspects of the policy include eliminating rigid distinctions between arts and science, vocational and academic streams, as well as improving assessment methods. These faculty and subject boundaries will be weakened through the proper implementation of this policy.

Vision of New Education System of India for School Education and Higher Education to Transform India into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. Major reforms in education in India aims is to achieve 100% youth and adult literacy. Curriculum and pedagogy must develop the students a deep sense of respect towards the Fundamental Duties, Constitutional values, and a conscious awareness and responsibilities in a changing world [4].

Institutional restructuring of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary and innovative individuals educationally and economically. This aims to increase the gross enrolment ratio in higher education from 26% (it was 2018) to 50% by 2035. Initially HEIs will

plan to become multidisciplinary by 2030, and then gradually increase student strength to the optimal levels [2]. By the year 2040, all higher education institutions shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions and greater student enrolments for maximum use of infrastructure and resources, and also aim to create multidisciplinary communities.

Principles of NEP 2020:

The National Education Policy 2020 marks a significant shift in India's educational landscape, aiming to transform the way of teaching and learning [5]. It emphasizes a holistic, student-centric education that fosters the unique capabilities of each learner. Key principles from the National Education Policy 2020 in India, focusing on a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education. These principles aim to transform the education system by:

- 1. Recognizing and fostering unique capabilities:** Encouraging teachers and parents to support each student's individual development in both academic and non-academic areas.
- 2. Flexibility in learning methods:** Allowing learners to choose their own paths based on their talents and interests.
- 3. Interdisciplinary approach:** Eliminating rigid distinctions between arts, sciences, curricular, and extracurricular activities to promote a unified understanding of knowledge.
- 4. Multidisciplinary and holistic education:** Integrating various subjects, including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports, to prepare students for a complex world.
- 5. Conceptual understanding over rote learning:** Focusing on deep understanding rather than mere memorization.
- 6. Incorporating ethics and values:** Teaching of essential human and constitutional values like empathy, respect, and scientific temper.
- 7. Promoting multilingualism:** Recognizing the importance of language [6] in teaching and learning and promoting the same.
- 8. Formative assessment:** Shifting from summative assessments to regular, formative evaluations that support learning rather than just preparing for the examinations.

These principles are designed to create a more inclusive, flexible, and effective education system that prepares students for success in all aspects of life.

Education to All Sections of society: The National Education Policy 2020 strives to make education accessible to all sections of society, regardless of their background or birth circumstances. As mentioned in paragraph 6.2, [1] various factors such as poverty, social norms, language barriers, and limited access to quality educational institutions hinder the enrolment and retention rates of students from disadvantaged communities. The policy recognizes the need for targeted interventions to promote education among minority groups, particularly those that have historically been underrepresented in the education system. By addressing these disparities, the policy aims to create a more inclusive and equitable education system that provides opportunities for all children to learn, grow, and excel in the fields of interest.

Key aspects of NEP in Higher education:

Higher education is an important component of a country's development, and India's higher education system is undergoing significant transformations. The key aspects include:

- 1. Institutional Restructuring and Consolidation:** Streamlining and consolidating higher education institutions to improve efficiency, quality, and accessibility.
- 2. Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty:** Fostering a culture of excellence among faculty members, providing them with opportunities for professional development, and recognizing their contributions.
- 3. Quality Universities and Colleges:** Establishing and maintaining high-quality institutions that offer relevant and innovative programs, ensuring that students receive a world-class education.
- 4. Forward-Looking Vision for India's Higher Education System:** Envisioning higher education a future more holistic, multidisciplinary, and responsive to the needs of the economy and society.
- 5. Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students:** Creating conducive learning environments by providing adequate support services, and promoting student well-being to ensure that students grow academically and personally.
- 6. Effective Governance and Leadership for HEIs:** Strengthening governance and leadership structures to ensure that institutions are managed efficiently, effectively, and transparently.
- 7. Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education:** Reforming the regulatory framework to promote autonomy, accountability, and innovation in HEIs.
- 8. Equity and Inclusion:** Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education, ensuring that all students have access to quality education, regardless of their background or socio-economic status.
- 9. Teachers Education:** Strengthening teacher education programs to ensure that teachers are enabled with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to provide high-quality education.
- 10. Promoting Quality Academic Research in all Fields:** Establishing a national research foundation to promote cutting-edge research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in all fields.
- 11. Reimagining Vocational Education:** Revitalizing vocational education to make it more relevant, effective, aligned, and ensuring skills that needs industry and job market.

By focusing on these key areas, India's higher education system can become more robust, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the economy and society, ultimately contributing to the country's growth and development.

Objective and salient features:

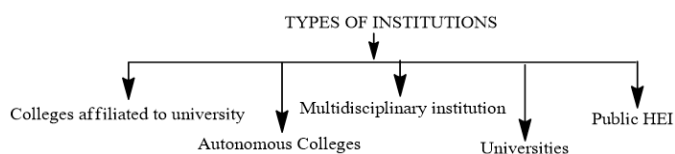
The primary objective of a holistic and multidisciplinary education system is to enhance human abilities across various dimensions, including mental, cultural, social, physical, emotional, and moral aspects [7]. This approach aims to provide comprehensive education by all undergraduate

programs, including those in technical, medical, and vocational fields. Key components of an optimal learning environment include adequate content, engaged pedagogy, regular formative assessment, and sufficient student support. An education should foster character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, service spirit, and 21st-century skills across diverse fields, such as sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, personal, and vocational subjects. It should allow individuals to develop specialized areas of their interest. Some notable features of the NEP 2020 related to higher education include:

1. **Single Universal Entrance Exam:** Implementing a single entrance exam can reduce the stress of taking multiple competitive examinations and promote fair competition among student applicants.
2. **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):** Creating an ABC system allows students to accumulate academic credits while enrolled in classes at different accredited universities. These credits can be transferred if a student chooses to change colleges or retained if they leave colleges. This enabling them to return years later and continue their education.

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS:

- i. **Colleges affiliated to university:** These are colleges that are affiliated to a university and offer undergraduate and/or postgraduate programs.
- ii. **Autonomous Colleges:** These are colleges that have the autonomy to grant degrees and offer undergraduate and/or postgraduate programs.
- iii. **Multidisciplinary institution:** These are institutions that offer a wide range of academic programs across multiple disciplines such as arts, science, engineering, and humanities.
- iv. **Universities:** These are institutions that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs in a wide range of disciplines and have the authority to grant degrees.
- v. **Public HEI:** These are higher education institutions that are funded and managed by the government.



Model Public Universities: Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs): Model public universities, known as Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), will be set up. These universities will aim to attain the highest standards for multidisciplinary education across India. A broad framework of higher education qualifications will ensure consistency across institutions through online, offline, and traditional programmes.

NEP Curriculum Framework:

1. **Flexible and Adaptive Curriculum Structure:** The curriculum framework [8] will be designed flexible, allows the integration of multiple disciplines and providing

students with various entry and exit options. This structure will foster lifelong learning and create new opportunities for students to explore different fields and interests.

2. **Practical Learning Experiences:** To provide students with hands-on experience, internships and industrial training will be incorporated into the curriculum. These experiences will be conducted in collaboration with local industries, businesses, and organizations, enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world.
3. **Credit-Based Courses and Projects:** The curriculum will include credit-based courses and projects that focus on Community Engagement and Service, Environmental Education. Students will participate in projects that promote community engagement, social responsibility, and service. Courses will cover environmental topics such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development. The curriculum will emphasize Value-Based Education by the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal values, ensuring that students become responsible individuals.
4. **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs):** To achieve global standards in quality education, MERUs will be established. These universities will focus on multidisciplinary education and research, providing students with a comprehensive and holistic learning experience.
5. **Research and Innovation:** The curriculum will focus on research and innovation by establishing Incubation Centres to foster entrepreneurship and innovation. Start-up incubation centres will support students in developing their ideas and turning them into successful ventures. Technology Development Centres will focus on developing new technologies and promoting research-based specialization in academics, government, and industry.
6. **Inclusion of Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities:** The curriculum will incorporate co-curricular and extracurricular activities to ensure that students develop various academic and professional skills.
7. **Counselling Support:** Counselling support will be provided to ensure the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of students. This will enable students to recognise the challenges of academic and beyond academics.

NEP: Curriculum Framework-Motivated Teachers

- i. **Optimal Student-Teacher Ratios:** Maintaining low student-teacher ratios to ensure personalized attention and effective learning.
- ii. **Faculty Engagement and Motivation:** Fostering a happy, enthusiastic, engaged, and motivated faculty community that is passionate about teaching and learning.
- iii. **Academic Freedom and Innovation:** Empowering faculty to adopt innovative pedagogical approaches, design engaging learning experiences.
- iv. **Recognition and Rewards:** Providing incentives for excellent performance in academics, including rewards, promotions, recognition, and opportunities for leadership

development.

- v. **Effective and Efficient Leadership:** Ensuring that institutional leaders are equipped to drive innovation, and support the academic community in achieving its goals.

Implementation of NEP 2020 for higher education in Maharashtra:

In India, UGC and Central Education department encourage all the states to implement NEP 2020 in their all educational boards and Institutions. Various states are implementing the NEP 2020 after state committees' reports and recommendations concern to the states. State governments are implementing NEP 2020 as per their preparedness. NEP 2020 is being implemented in most of the states of India.

In the state Maharashtra, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 [9] is being implemented in higher education from 2023. The Government of Maharashtra has established various committees and task forces time to time for the effective implementation and to spread awareness among stakeholders. Initially it has implemented on pilot scale for the Autonomous Institutions, post-graduate institutions and University departments. Government of Maharashtra initiated 'Me and My NEP' [10] campaign for the comprehensive implementation in the state. From the year 2024 NEP is implemented for the undergraduate first years in affiliated colleges. The results, responses and the consequences of this policy are awaited and will be seen after its complete implementation at all the levels of study. Some challenges and difficulties are observed in the beginning of implementation are due to varied structures and curriculums in the existing frameworks prior to the NEP 2020 in various universities and affiliated HEIs. NEP 2020 pattern is more flexible and made available multiple options in the form of various academic baskets to the students.

Challenges in the implementation:

1. **Standardization and Consistency:** Establish standardized, consistent, and nationally acceptable outcomes for various programs across the country through a national curricular framework.
2. **Confusion among stakeholders:** The introduction of the revised National Education Policy (NEP) has led to some confusion among students and parents regarding the selection of elective subjects from the available baskets. Due to limited awareness of the new NEP structure, they struggle to understand the entry and exit options available in the NEP 2020. This poses a significant challenge for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as they navigate the initial stages of implementation and work to educate other stakeholders on the proper execution of the policy.
3. **Limited Access:** Address limited access to higher education, particularly in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, where few Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offer courses in local languages.
4. **Global Mobility:** Foster global mobility and flexibility for lifelong learning.
5. **Comprehensive Sub-Systems:** Develop meticulous sub-systems for teaching, learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

6. **Teacher and Institutional Autonomy:** Enhance teacher and institutional autonomy.
7. **Pathways for Mobility:** Establish pathways for horizontal and vertical mobility amongst the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and National Skills [11] Qualifications Framework (NSQF).
8. **Merit-Based Career Management:** Develop mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders.
9. **Research Emphasis:** Increase emphasis on research at universities and colleges, and provide research funding across disciplines.
10. **Affiliating Universities:** Address the issue of large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.

New Pattern in Higher education: The table summarizes the duration and exit options [12] made available during an undergraduate and post-graduate degree programs.

Duration	Level	Certification	Qualification title with minimum credits
1 year	5	Certificate in a discipline or field (vocational/ professional)	Undergraduate Certificate (in the field of learning/ discipline) for those who exit after the first year (two semesters) of the undergraduate programme. (Programme duration: first year or two semesters of the undergraduate programme): Credits: 36-40
2 years	6	Diploma after 2 years of study	Undergraduate Diploma (in the field of learning/ discipline) for those who exit after two years (four semesters) of the undergraduate programme (Programme duration: First two years or four semesters of the undergraduate programme): Credits: 72-80
3 years	7	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's Degree (Programme duration: Three years or six semesters): Credits: 108-120
4 years	8	Bachelor's degree with Honors or Specialization	Bachelor's Degree (Honours/ Research) (Programme duration: Four years or eight semesters): Credits: 144-160
Master's Degree (Programme duration: Two years or four semesters after obtaining a Bachelor's degree).			
1st Year	8	Post-Graduate Diploma	Post-Graduate Diploma for those who exit after the successful completion of the first year or two semesters of the two-year Master's degree programme). Credits: 36-40

2nd Year	9	Master's Degree	Master's Degree (Programme duration: Two years or four semesters after obtaining a Bachelor's degree). Credits: 72-80
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Table 1: Pattern in Higher education with exit options

Programme	Duration	Eligibility
Master's (Option a)	2 years	3-year Bachelor's programme
Master's (Option b)	1 year	4-year Bachelor's programme with Research
Integrated Bachelor's/Master's	5 years	Grade 12 School
Ph.D.	Master's degree or 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research	

Table 2: Multidisciplinary Bachelor's and Master's Programme

The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme is the preferred option. It allows students to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education, in addition to a focus on their chosen major and minor subjects. These earned credits at different levels are retained if a student opt for exits option and chooses to change colleges. This also enabling learner to return years later and continue their education in HEIs.

CONCLUSION

The NEP-2020 presents a visionary approach to education, aiming to create a system that is inclusive, flexible, and focused on the holistic development of students. By implementing these principles, India can move towards creating a more equitable, effective, and inspiring educational environment for all. India's higher education system can become more robust, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of the economy and society, ultimately contributing to the country's growth and development. The curriculum will incorporate co-curricular and extracurricular activities to ensure students develop numerous skills, including professional, physical, and social skills. This is necessary to develop meticulous sub-systems for teaching, learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment for the desired outcomes of NEP. Institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment procedures.

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